

# the **KALIFORNSKI**

Since 1979

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**NEWSLETTER OF THE YUGOSLAV-AMERICAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION, INC.**

P.O. Box 226, Watsonville, California 95077

No. 128 March 1990

(A NON-PROFIT, NON-RELIGIOUS, & NON-POLITICAL ORGANIZATION)

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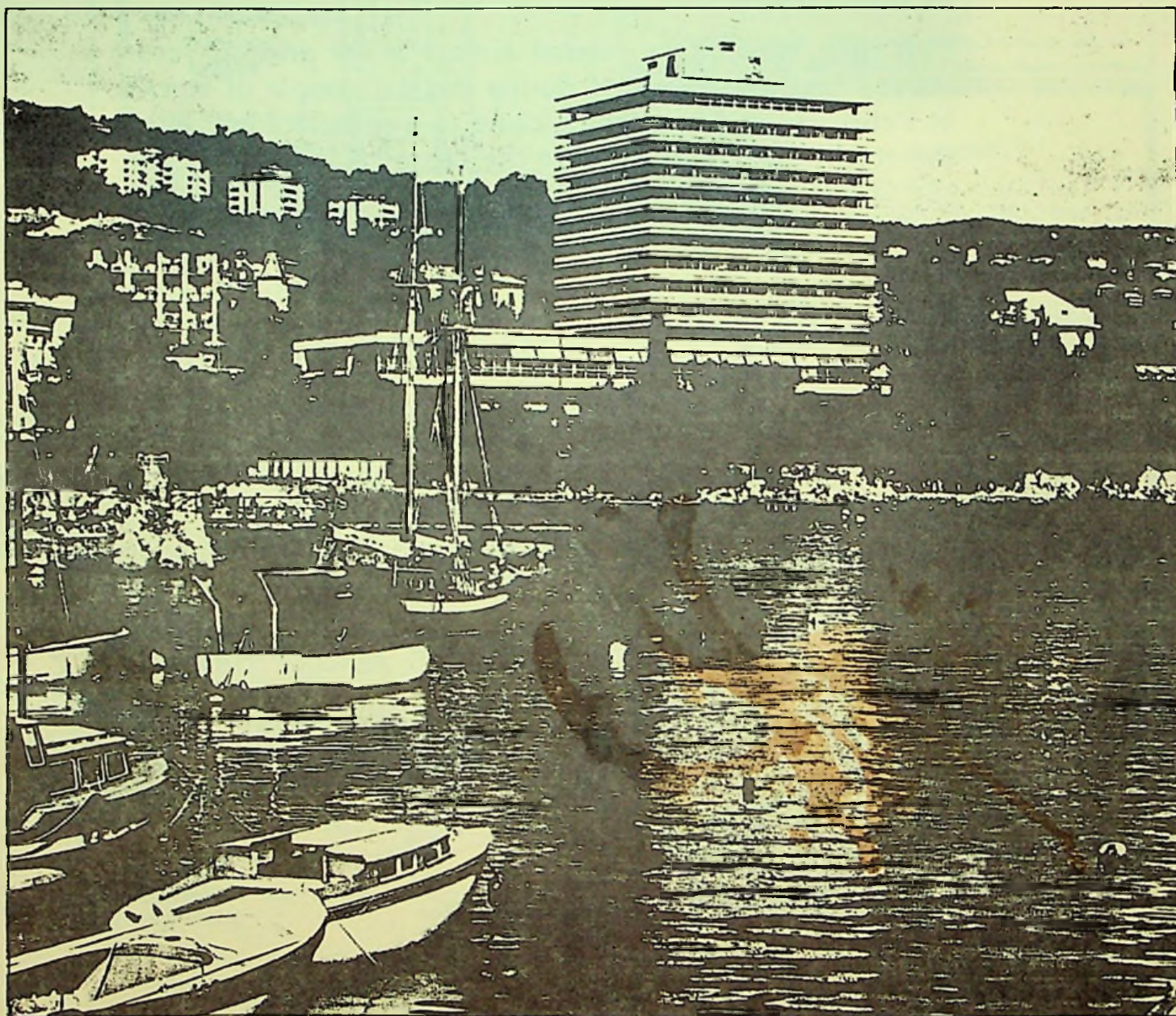
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EDITORS: Dale Skillicorn and Janet (Pelich) Justus-Skillicorn

Contact at Rapid Offset Printing, 22 East Lake Avenue, Watsonville, California 95076

(408) 724-2900

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OPATIJA

## FROM THE EDITORS —

This time we'll take the blame for the delay in getting this issue of KALIFORNSKI on its way to you. We have had some complaints in the past, but that usually traced back to the Post Office. KALIFORNSKI is almost always in the mail to you at least a week or more before the first Sunday of each month. Even so, some readers haven't received it until a couple of weeks after it was mailed. That we can't do much about.

This time, earthquake-related damage to the printing press started becoming evident during the last couple of weeks in February, and everything came to a complete halt until the repairman could get here the 6th of March. Sorry for any inconvenience.

— Dale and Jan

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## Yugoslav Radio Hour

Remember to listen to the YUGOSLAV RADIO HOUR every Sunday at 9:35 a.m. on radio station KOMY, 1340 on the dial.

ANN & ANDY SOLDÓ are your hosts and bring you the finest in old favorites as well as the very latest music from Yugoslavia. They will be happy to play any special requests you might ask for whether it be for birthday, anniversary, or for any special announcement.

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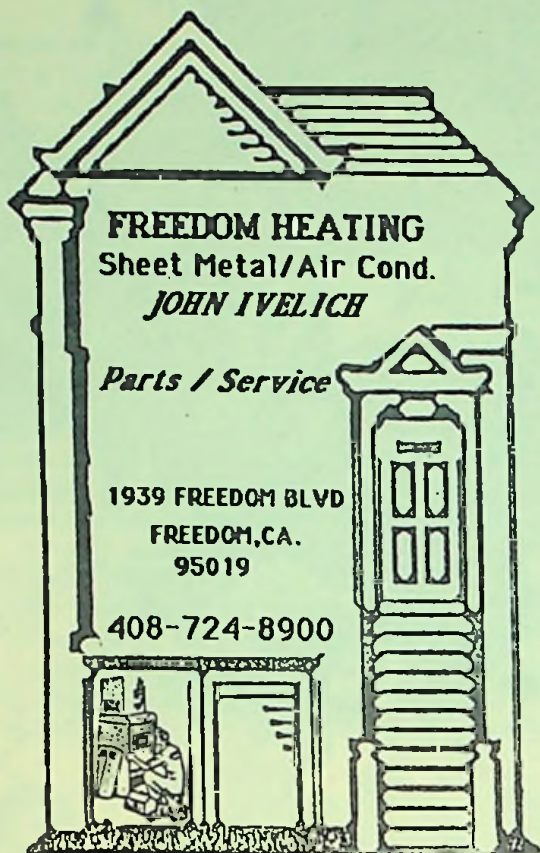


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The Slovenian writer Andrej Hieng has so far written three books of short stories, four long novels (a fifth is with the publishers), nine plays (for theatre, TV, and radio) and is at present at work on a tenth commissioned earlier. All his novels have been translated in Yugoslavia into Serbo-Croat and Macedonian, and there are also translations in Hungarian, Czech, and Polish. Western publishers, too, are interested in his novels, but find them somewhat overlong (between 400 and 600 pages), and the writer is now preparing a new novel which will be shorter.

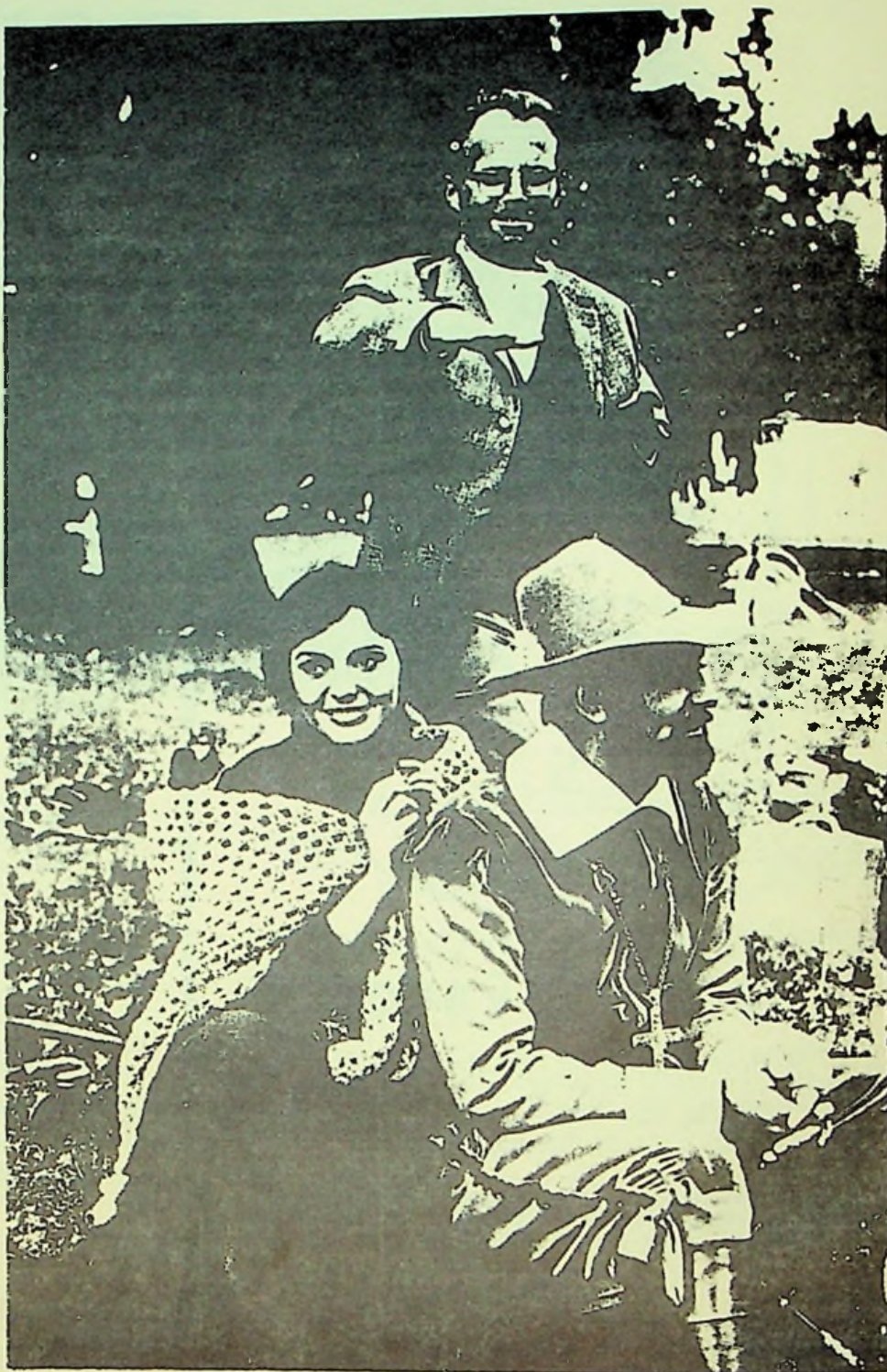
Hieng was born in 1925 in Ljubljana, where he still lives and works today. He began writing at the age of 14, when he produced his first short stories. Though his family engaged in commerce, books were always prized in his house and everyone would gather after supper for a "round table" meeting at which each member of the family would read his own book.

Hieng completed his studies at the Drama Academy, specializing in direction, and for a long time worked as a director in theatres all over Slovenia. Yet he considers himself to be primarily a storyteller, as this, he feels, is a reflection of his nature. He really enjoys writing prose.

He wrote his first play rather late, when he was already established as a novelist. It was the late Bojan Stupica, a distinguished Slovenian director, who suggested he write a play for the Yugoslav Drama Theatre in Belgrade, where Stupica worked. That is how "The Conquerors" came into being. Up to then he had never believed he would write plays, for, while a director, he had seen his colleagues "butcher" texts mercilessly and re-tailor them "the way they wanted". "The Conquerors" (describing the conquest of the Aztec kingdom by the Spaniards) marked the start of his Spanish cycle, which also includes the dramas "Burlesque about the Greek" (about El Greco), "Deaf Man at the Border" (about Goya), and "The Return of Cortes".

Hieng became passionately interested, as a dramatist, in the colonial conquests of the Spanish Empire. What most fascinated him was

the dissolution of a great historical conception. For him, the conquests contained certain fundamental elements that would ultimately lead to the complete disintegration of these colonies. Thus, in the play "The Conquerors" we see in the 500 Spaniards who subjugated the Aztecs the utter collapse of their original idea even among the first generation of colonizers. Hieng wanted to point out that sometimes even great historical



# ANDREJ HIENG

BY VELJKO ALEKSIĆ

*Hieng directing a film.*

events are very quickly transformed into a mockery of themselves, a farce. He does not insist this is inevitable, but believes it is certainly frequent.

He was also well on into his career when he started writing novels. His first, "Timon's Daughter", appeared when he was 36. Then he got married, left the theatre and began working as a freelance writer.

The novel is for him an "account of the whole world", in other words, a literary form with possibilities that enable the writer to convey a picture of the world as a totality. In his opinion, the novel contains all the elements present in the other genres.

Although modest by nature, he does rank himself quite high among Yugoslav novelists. "The novel in Yugoslavia only really came to life after the Second World War when it started to portray the world we live in in a very varied and complex way."

and their great-grandsons; at the end of the novel their destinies become so closely interwoven that we realize we are living in one great time continuum in which historical distances are extremely relative. In this huge space man can accomplish a great deal and has considerable meaning. This is the optimistic aspect of the novel, but only one of its aspects. For man is also always the victim of historical processes in which he is broken and destroyed. He is the victim of his own prejudices and his own pre-history. Since Hieng approaches his subject-matter in this way, we can call his novels neither realistic nor naturalistic.

"Even so, in principle my starting-point is always a precise study of life," says Hieng. "I have always done a lot of historical research into the backgrounds of my novels, for the smallest details which may not mean much to somebody else have vital significance for me. And it is these

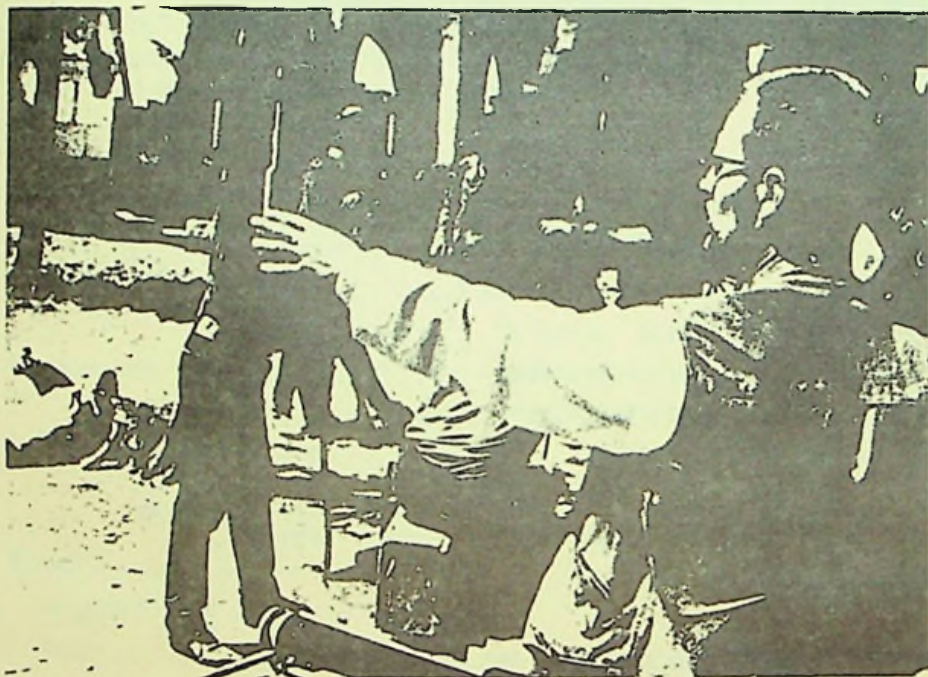
humour on the other. An original character is one who, through his actions and his attitude to life, stands out from a crowd of others, attracts the writer, carries him along and draws him to himself. That is why my characters are often eccentric, a little crazy perhaps, certainly different, because it is the artist's duty to open windows into unfamiliar and strange souls."

Andrej Hieng starts off a novel by putting his original ideas into the form of a short story. As the writing process continues this story opens up and grows. "So it happens that the first small inspiration, often only one motif, becomes a whole novel . . .

"You can always find inspirational elements in historical events. I'm not a particularly studious man. I don't collect piles of books to help me describe a character from, say, 1880. But it has rarely happened to me when writing about some events or characters from the past that I have given a false picture. Checking up on the historical facts afterwards I have often found that events really did happen in the way I described."

This is undoubtedly what we mean by talent when an artist, subconsciously or by instinct, succeeds in recreating real historical events as if he had been part of them. Or perhaps it is the seventh creative sense of the writer.

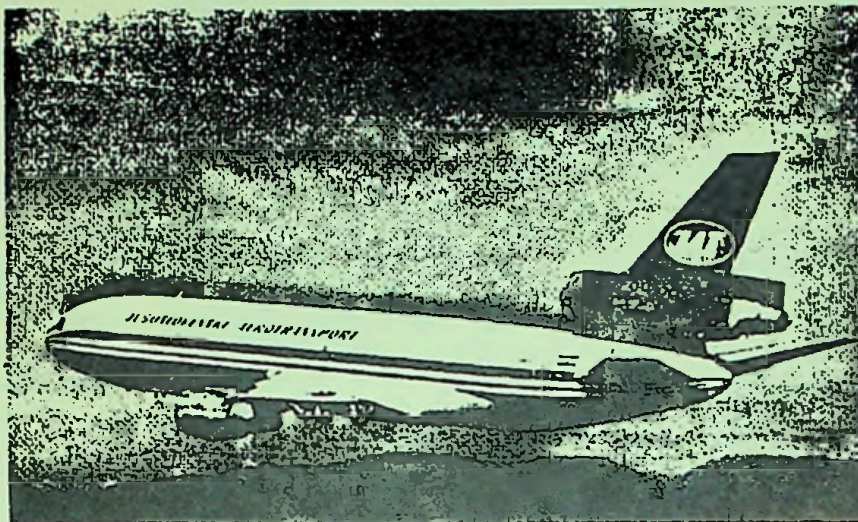
"Sometimes, of course, you just dry up. At the moment I'm having a terrible time with a play for which I've already signed a contract. Thanks to the patience and understanding of those around me I'm managing to overcome the crisis. Otherwise, I'm always at my best when I write normally, when I sit and the thoughts simply flow . . . It's a terrible feeling when the words suddenly dry up. I wrote one act and just stopped. I can't go on. I feel subconsciously that there's a mistake somewhere, but I don't know where. This feeling has completely paralyzed me and I simply sit and wait. I'm not a natural dramatist and that hampers me because in plays, too, I seek style. Characters that are not properly experienced start swimming away from me. Then I have to 'save' them by good style . . ."



In most of his novels, Andrej Hieng sets his characters in historical events, using this historical framework and his characters to express what is human in all of them. This happens in the novel "The Wizard" where he places his characters in the year 1880 and parallels this story with another set in modern times, aiming to show the close connection between our way of life today and that of 100 years ago. The novel describes great-grandfathers

myriad small details which make up the whole mosaic of man's personality and his surroundings . . .

"I am equally interested in monumental historical figures and ordinary 'little' people. But even the 'little' people must be of interest in some way, as literature is made up of interesting personalities. I consider that one of the vital elements of all intellectual creation is that there must be originality on the one hand, and



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# JOIN US TODAY

YACO was established in 1979 as a non-profit club without political or religious ties for the sole purpose of bringing together Yugoslavs and other interested persons to make known and to preserve our Slavic heritage. We are proud that among our membership we have families and individuals whose roots represent each region of present-day Yugoslavia, as well as non-slavic members who support the club's goals.

A year-around series of programs and events has proven an enjoyable way for YACO to provide its focus on Slavic heritage. Such activities include picnics, lectures and slide presentations on Yugoslavia and its historic culture, plus potluck and sit-down dinners. We also publish a monthly newsletter, THE KALIFORNSKI, full of interesting articles, recipes, and news of our area's Yugoslav community.

Our meetings (the first Sunday of each month) may include a potluck, special dinner, films, dancing, and raffles, plus we hold an annual July barbeque.

Won't you accept our invitation to join us? We're sure you'll soon find YACO to be one of your favorite clubs.

Our dues are as follows:

Single membership ..... \$12  
Family membership ..... \$18

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth date: \_\_\_\_\_

Husband: \_\_\_\_\_

Wife: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

Yugoslav Background: \_\_\_\_\_

Children under 18 included in Family Membership: \_\_\_\_\_

# ATTENTION:

THE KALIFORNSKI is your publication. If there is anything in particular that you would like to see in any future issues, please don't hesitate to contact us. If you have any subjects relating to Yugoslav heritage or about Yugoslavs, here or abroad, that you would like to share or see published in this newsletter, please let us know. We would appreciate your input in publishing this newsletter each month. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact us:

Dale Skillicorn and  
Janet (Pelich) Justus-Skillicorn  
c/o Rapid Offset Printing  
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## SUGGESTED TOPICS:

1. Trips by YACO members
2. Visitors from the Old Country
3. Newspaper or magazine articles about Yugoslavia or Yugoslavs, local or abroad
4. Weddings, anniversaries, graduations, birth announcements, or special celebrations by YACO members
5. Civic or cultural contributions by Yugoslavs
6. Yugoslav recipes
7. Yugoslav songs, poetry or stories
8. Special family traditions for holidays, etc.
9. Yugoslav stories for children
10. Anything you think might be of interest to YACO members

## NEW DEADLINE

A new DEADLINE has been set for the 10th of each month so that we might get the paper out even earlier. It seems that our members out of Watsonville are not receiving their KALIFORNSKI early enough to plan on attending any of our programs. Members in Watsonville receive their copies at least two days after mailing so it seems to be a problem with a hold up at the post office. If I don't have the information in time, I will not be able to publish it until the next issue. REMEMBER to send me any information by the 10th of each month.

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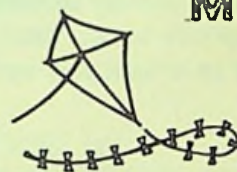
Dale Skillicorn and Janet (Pelich) Justus-Skillicorn

## CALENDAR

### NOTICE!

**THERE WILL BE  
NO  
GENERAL MEETINGS  
UNTIL  
FURTHER  
NOTICE!**

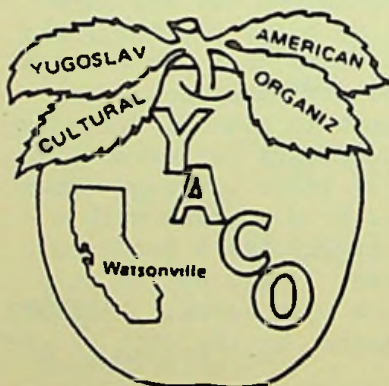
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